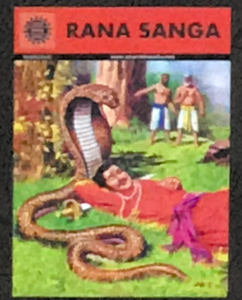
BAPPA RAWAL

He was known as a hardworking, honest young cowherd, but Bappa Rawal's bearing and talents were that of a well-bred prince. And one day he was to unite the divided Rajput clans to regain their lost glory. This gallant 8th century ruler of Chittor lived to be a hundred years old, enjoying his last years in the tranquillity of the remote Himalayas.

OTHER ACK BRAVEHEARTS:



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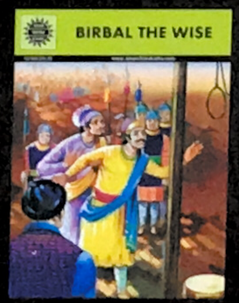

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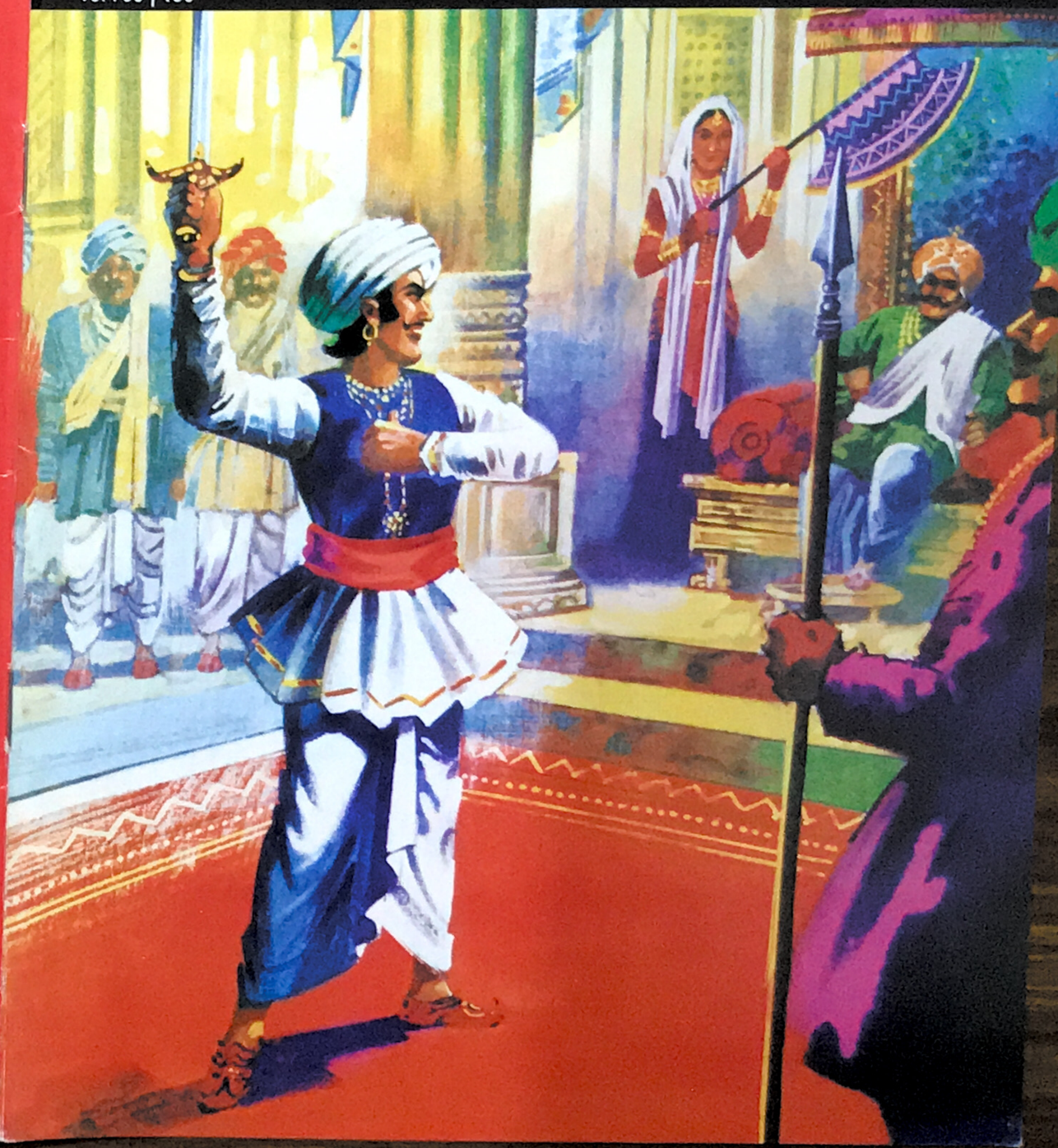


BAPPA RAWAL

IN THE 8TH CENTURY, WHILE FOREIGN ENEMIES MOUNTED INVASION AFTER INVASION ON THE WESTERN PARTS OF INDIA, THE INDIAN RULERS CONTINUED TO WASTE AWAY THEIR STRENGTH IN FIGHTING EACH OTHER FOR SELFISH ENDS.

NAGADITYA, THE RULER OF IDUR, WAS KILLED BY HIS OWN BHIL SUBJECTS. THE QUEEN MOTHER, WITH HER ONLY SON, THE THREE-YEAR-OLD SHAILADHISH AND SOME LOYAL FOLLOWERS, WENT INTO HIDING. A FEW YEARS LATER—

RAJ GURU, I AM TIRED OF THIS HARD LIFE.

YOU WILL HAVE TO BEAR IT FOR THE SAKE OF THE PRINCE.

WILL HE HAVE NO RESPITE FROM THE ENEMY?

HE WILL. WE PLAN TO GIVE HIM ANOTHER NAME.

SINCE THE DESTINY OF MEWAR LIES IN THE HANDS OF THE PRINCE HIS NAME WILL NOW BE BAPPA RAWAL.

BUT HE WOULD STILL BE EASILY RECOGNISED, HERE!

WE WILL TAKE HIM TO PARASHAR VILLAGE, IN THE TRIKOOT RANGE*. NOBODY WILL RECOGNISE HIM THERE.

*TODAY KNOWN AS THE ABU HILLS.

MUST YOU TAKE HIM AWAY FROM ME?

YES, IN THE INTERESTS OF MEWAR YOU WILL HAVE TO BEAR THIS SEPARATION.

ONE AFTERNOON, THE RAJGURU ARRIVED WITH BAPPA, AT A BRAHMAN'S HOUSE IN NAGDA—

BAPPA IS HARD-WORKING AND HONEST.

HE WILL SERVE YOU WELL.

LATER—

BAPPA, EVERY MORNING YOU WILL HAVE TO TAKE MY CATTLE TO THE HILLS TO GRAZE.

IT WILL BE DONE, SIR.

THEY HAVE GONE! I AM ALL ALONE.

THAT EVENING—

BAPPA, IT'S TIME TO GIVE THE CATTLE THEIR FEED.

I'M COMING.

BAPPA TOILED HARD AND SOON WON PRAISE FROM THE MASTER AND HIS WIFE.

BAPPA IS VERY INDUSTRIOUS INDEED.

HE NEVER SHIRKS WORK.

EVERY MORNING BAPPA USED TO TAKE THE CATTLE TO THE NEARBY HILLS AND RETURN WITH THEM IN THE EVENING. ONE DAY –

HEY! WHO ARE YOU?

I AM BALIYA. HE IS DEV.

WE ARE LEARNING TO SHOOT ARROWS. YOU CAN JOIN US IF YOU LIKE.

SO, WHILE THE CATTLE GRAZED, BAPPA PRACTISED ARCHERY. SOON –

YOU'VE HIT IT AGAIN, BAPPA!

HE'S NEVER MISSED A SINGLE SHOT.

HAVING MASTERED ARCHERY, BAPPA BEGAN TO PRACTISE SWORD-FIGHTING...

...AND WRESTLING.

BAPPA, YOU HAVE GOT THE BETTER OF US IN SWORD-FIGHTING AS WELL AS IN WRESTLING.

HENCEFORWARD YOU ARE OUR LEADER. YOU COMMAND. WE OBEY.

MEANWHILE BAPPA'S IMPROVING PHYSIQUE MADE THE BRAHMAN'S WIFE SUSPICIOUS.

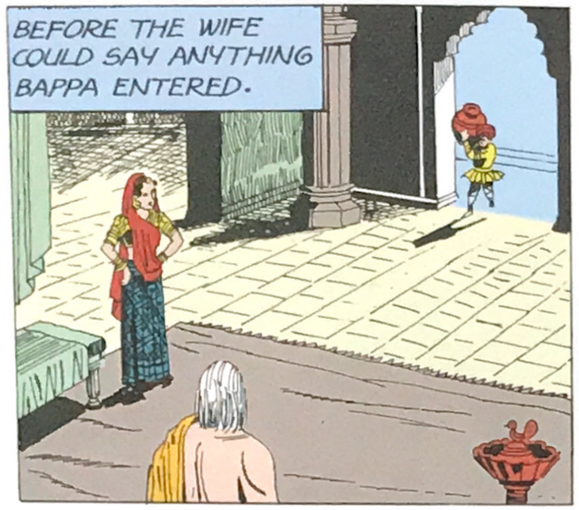
BAPPA IS NOT HONEST ANY MORE.

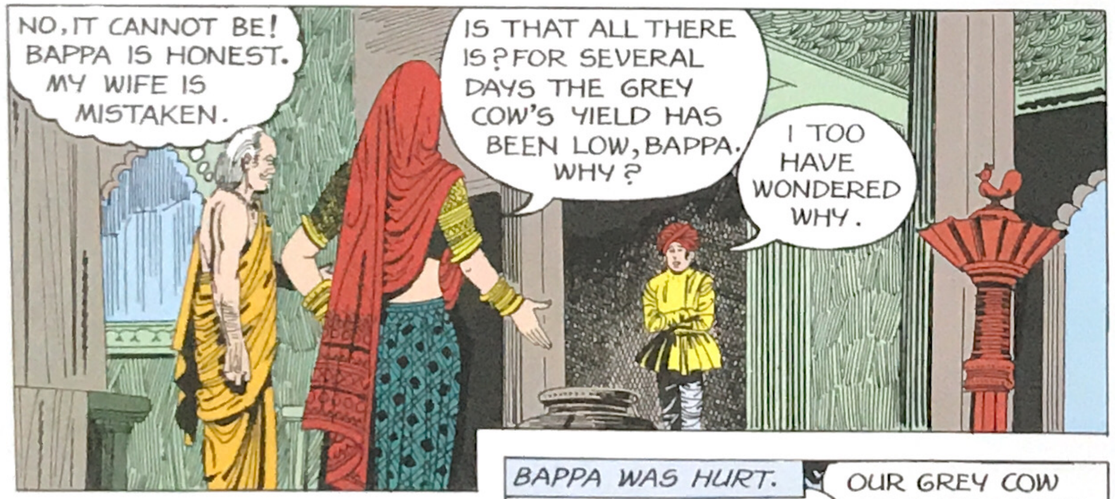
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?

DON'T YOU SEE HOW HEFTY HE HAS SUDDENLY BECOME?

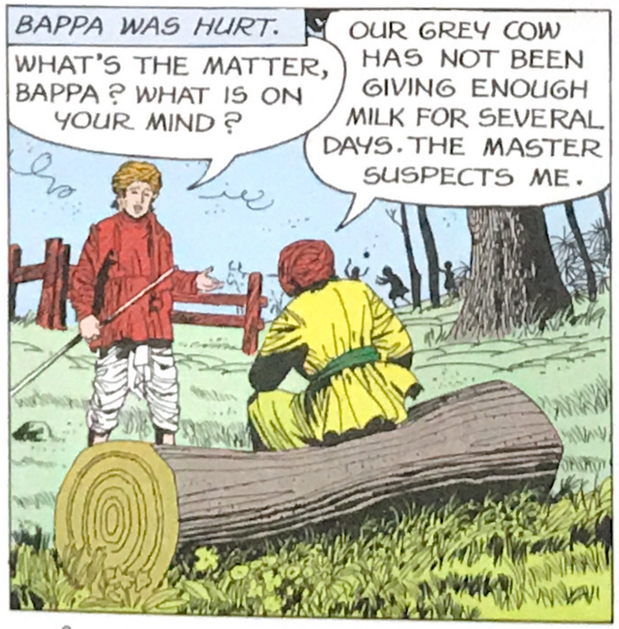
HE'S A GROWING BOY.

I HAVE MY DOUBTS. THE MILK YIELD OF OUR GREY COW HAS DECREASED.
YOU DON'T SUSPECT HIM OF DRINKING THE MILK, DO YOU?

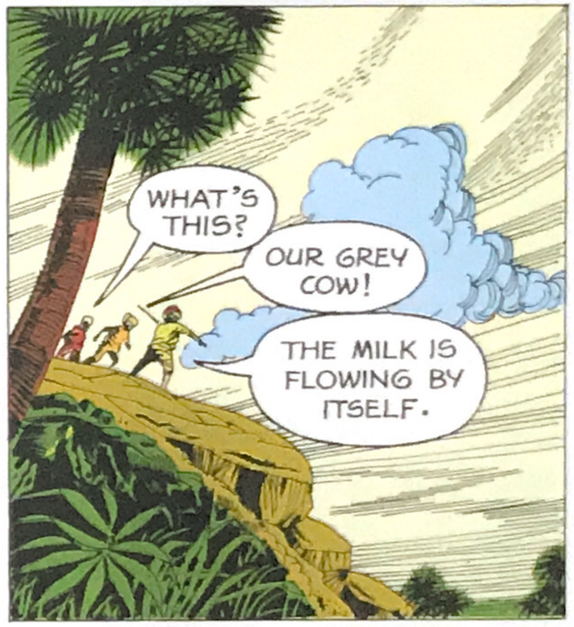

BEFORE THE WIFE COULD SAY ANYTHING BAPPA ENTERED.


NO, IT CANNOT BE! BAPPA IS HONEST. MY WIFE IS MISTAKEN.
IS THAT ALL THERE IS? FOR SEVERAL DAYS THE GREY COW'S YIELD HAS BEEN LOW, BAPPA. WHY?
I TOO HAVE WONDERED WHY.

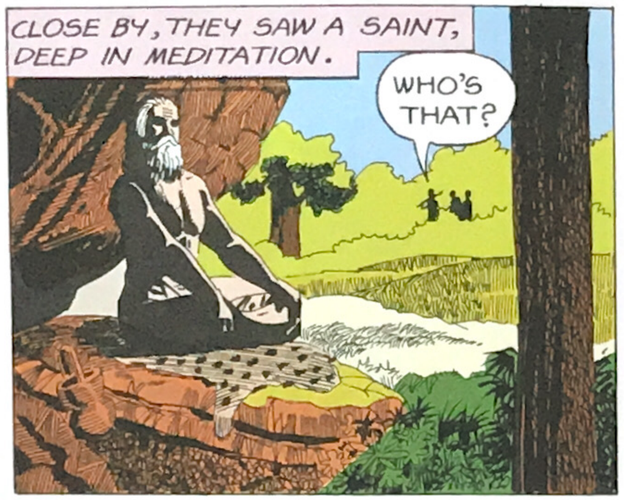
I SUSPECT YOU. YOU WILL HAVE TO PROVE YOUR HONESTY!
...AND CONVINCE MY WIFE.

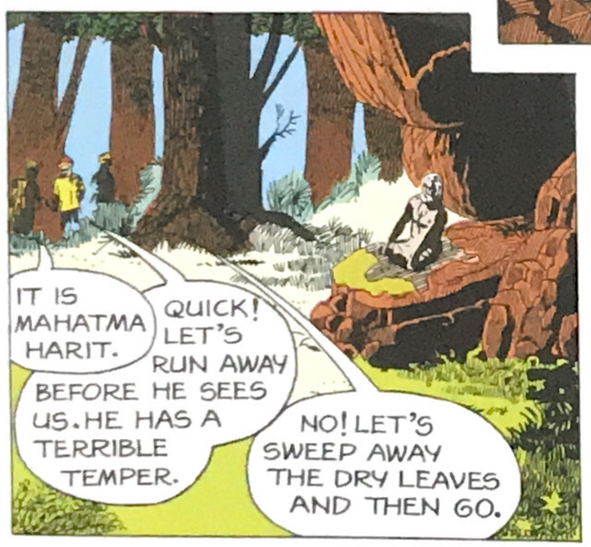

BAPPA WAS HURT.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, BAPPA? WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND?
OUR GREY COW HAS NOT BEEN GIVING ENOUGH MILK FOR SEVERAL DAYS. THE MASTER SUSPECTS ME.

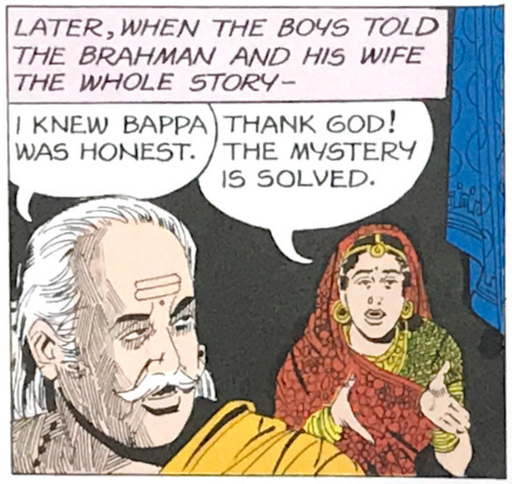
COULD SOMEONE BE MILKING IT WHEN WE ARE BUSY WRESTLING OR SHOOTING?
QUITE POSSIBLE. WE MUST KEEP AN EYE ON THAT COW.


WHAT'S THIS?
OUR GREY COW!
THE MILK IS FLOWING BY ITSELF.

SO THAT'S WHERE IT GOES!
YOU MUST INFORM YOUR MASTER.

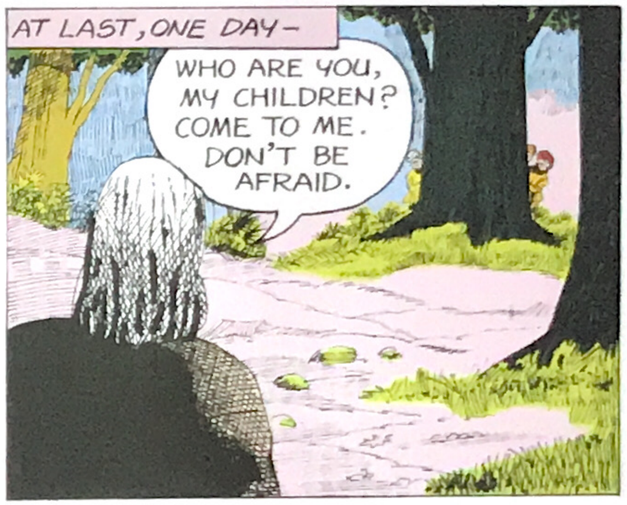

CLOSE BY, THEY SAW A SAINT, DEEP IN MEDITATION.
WHO'S THAT?

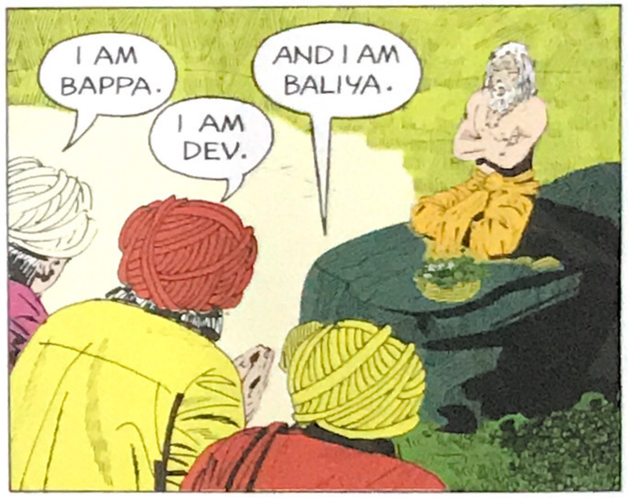

IT IS MAHATMA HARIT.
QUICK! LET'S RUN AWAY BEFORE HE SEES US. HE HAS A TERRIBLE TEMPER.
NO! LET'S SWEEP AWAY THE DRY LEAVES AND THEN GO.

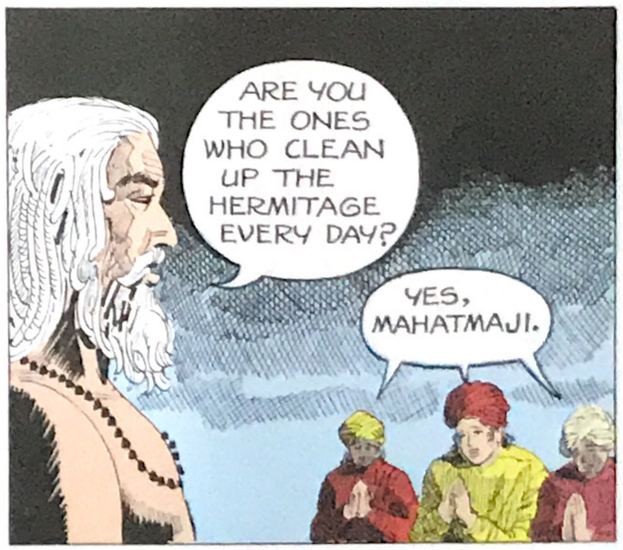

LATER, WHEN THE BOYS TOLD THE BRAHMAN AND HIS WIFE THE WHOLE STORY-
I KNEW BAPPA WAS HONEST.
THANK GOD! THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED.

AFTER THAT EVERY DAY THE BOYS MADE IT A POINT TO CLEAN THE GROVE IN WHICH THE SAINT MEDITATED.

MAHATMA HARIT BEGAN TO WONDER WHO IT WAS WHO SERVED HIM WITH SUCH CARE.
I MUST KNOW WHO IT IS.


AT LAST, ONE DAY-
WHO ARE YOU, MY CHILDREN? COME TO ME. DON'T BE AFRAID.


I AM BAPPA.
I AM DEV.
AND I AM BALIYA.


ARE YOU THE ONES WHO CLEAN UP THE HERMITAGE EVERY DAY?
YES, MAHATMAJI.

I AM VERY PLEASED WITH YOU. YOU MUST COME TO ME EVERY DAY. I WILL INSTRUCT YOU IN THE SACRED LORE.

WE ARE INDEBTED TO YOU, GURUDEV.

HE HAS THE MANNERS OF A PRINCE.

AT THAT TIME THE RULER OF NAGDA WAS A SOLANKI.

AUTUMN IS HERE, MANTRIJI.

YES, MY LORD.

HAVE YOU TAKEN CARE OF THE DEVI TEMPLE IN THE JUNGLE?

YES, MY LORD -AS I DO EVERY YEAR.

CELEBRATE THE "JHOOL JHOOLNI" FAIR WITH GREAT POMP AND PLEASE THE GODDESS. THE PRINCESS HAS TO BE MARRIED THIS YEAR.

ALONG WITH THE OTHER VILLAGERS, BAPPA AND HIS FRIENDS TOO WENT TO THE FAIR.

HAVE YOU BROUGHT ROPES FOR THE SWINGS?

THE PLEASURES OF THE FAIR WOULD BE INCOMPLETE WITHOUT A TURN ON THE SWINGS.

THE SOLANKI PRINCESS ALSO CAME TO THE FAIR FOR A VISIT TO THE TEMPLE.

THIS IS THE FAIR-GROUND, PRINCESS.

FROM HERE, WE WILL GO ON FOOT TO THE TEMPLE.

AT THE TEMPLE –

MOTHER GODDESS, GRANT ME MY HEART'S DESIRE!

MAY ALL YOUR WISHES BE FULFILLED!

IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO TAKE A TURN ON THE SWINGS AT THE FAIR. NOT TO DO SO WAS CONSIDERED UNLUCKY.

RAJKUMARI, WE FORGOT TO BRING ROPES. HOW WILL WE SWING?

THOSE BOYS HAVE ROPES. THEY MIGHT HELP US OUT.

THE PRINCESS CALLED OUT TO BAPPA AND HIS FRIENDS.

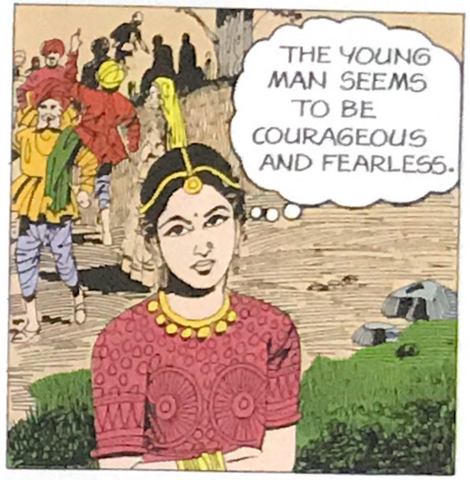
WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?
WE FORGOT TO BRING OUR ROPES. WILL YOU LEND US YOURS?

LET ME TEASE HER A LITTLE.
SURE – BUT ON ONE CONDITION!
NAME IT.

YOU WILL HAVE TO MARRY ME.
WHAT!

HOW DARE YOU? AREN'T YOU ASHAMED OF YOURSELF?
HER FATHER IS THE KING.
YOU COULD BE PUNISHED FOR THIS!

OUR FRIEND DID NOT SUGGEST A REAL WEDDING.
HE MEANT A MOCK ONE – LIKE THAT OF DOLLS.


THE YOUNG MAN SEEMS TO BE COURAGEOUS AND FEARLESS.

LET US GO, FRIENDS. WHY WASTE OUR TIME HERE?

WAIT! I ACCEPT YOUR CONDITION.

BAPPA RAWAL AND THE PRINCESS WENT THROUGH A MOCK CEREMONY.

AFTER THE CEREMONY–

YOU WILL SOON FORGET ME, RAJKUMARI.

NEVER! I WILL REMEMBER THIS MOCK MARRIAGE ALL MY LIFE.

MONTHS LATER–

THE SWING REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING. DO YOU REMEMBER THE BOY YOU MARRIED AT THE "JHOOL JHOOLNI" FAIR?

I DO. BUT I DON'T EVEN KNOW HIS NAME.

IT'S GOOD YOU DON'T – YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE MARRIED TO A PRINCE!

WHAT THE GIRL SAID WAS TRUE. SCHOLARLY ASTROLOGERS WERE BUSY COMPARING THE HOROSCOPES OF THE PRINCESS AND THE PRINCE. BUT –

SHE IS ALREADY MARRIED!

MY DAUGHTER MARRIED? WITHOUT MY KNOWLEDGE? IMPOSSIBLE! THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE.

YOUR DAUGHTER IS NOT WORTHY OF OUR PRINCE.

ASTROLOGY CAN NEVER BE WRONG, SIR!

THE PROPOSED WEDDING WAS CANCELLED. THE KING SENT FOR THE PRINCESS –

WHO IS THIS PERSON YOU HAVE MARRIED?

I DIDN'T ASK HIS NAME. WE HAD GONE THROUGH A MOCK WEDDING AT THE "JHOOL JHOOLNI" FAIR.

A FEW DAYS LATER THE PRINCESS BEGAN DRAWING A PORTRAIT FROM MEMORY.

AHA! HOW HANDSOME HE IS!

WHY! YOUR PICTURE IS A PERFECT REPLICA OF THAT BOY.

I WISH WE HAD ASKED HIM HIS NAME!

WHEN THE PICTURE WAS COMPLETED –

I HAD NEVER IMAGINED THAT OUR GAME WOULD RESULT IN A LIFE-LONG BOND!

WHO IS THIS?

THE SAME BOY I WAS TALKING ABOUT, FATHER.

THE KING TURNED TO HIS GUARDS.

THE YOUNG MAN IN THIS PICTURE, WHEREVER HE BE, SHALL BE BROUGHT BEFORE ME.

NEWS OF THE KING'S ORDERS REACHED BAPPA.

THE KING'S MEN ARE LOOKING FOR THE BOY WHO MARRIED THE PRINCESS IN FUN.

WE MUST NOT LET THEM KNOW THAT IT WAS YOU, BAPPA.

LET US TAKE THE OATH OF SECRECY.

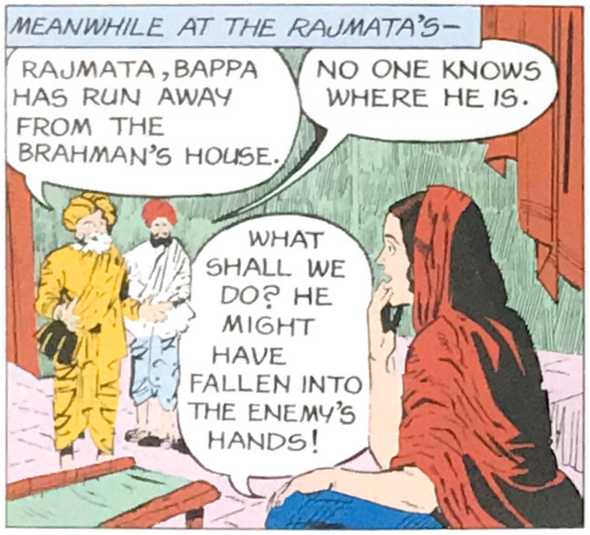
IF YOU DON'T KEEP MY IDENTITY A SECRET, MAY ALL THE GOOD DEEDS OF YOUR ANCESTORS BE BURIED IN A LAUNDERER'S WELL, LIKE THIS STONE!

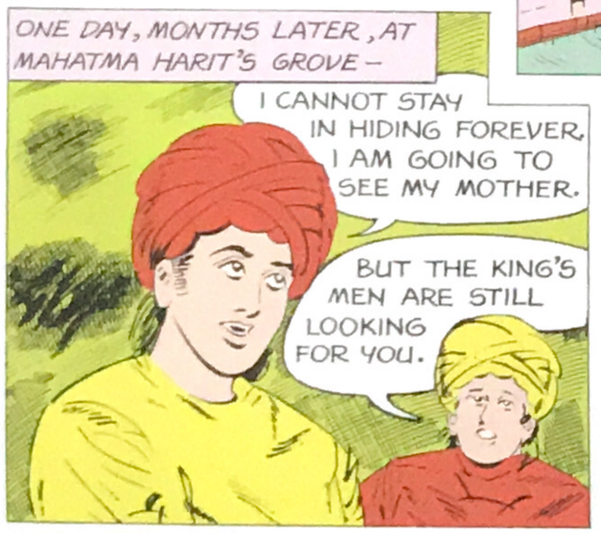
IT'S NOT ADVISABLE FOR ME TO STAY ON IN THIS PLACE.

BUT WHERE WILL YOU GO?

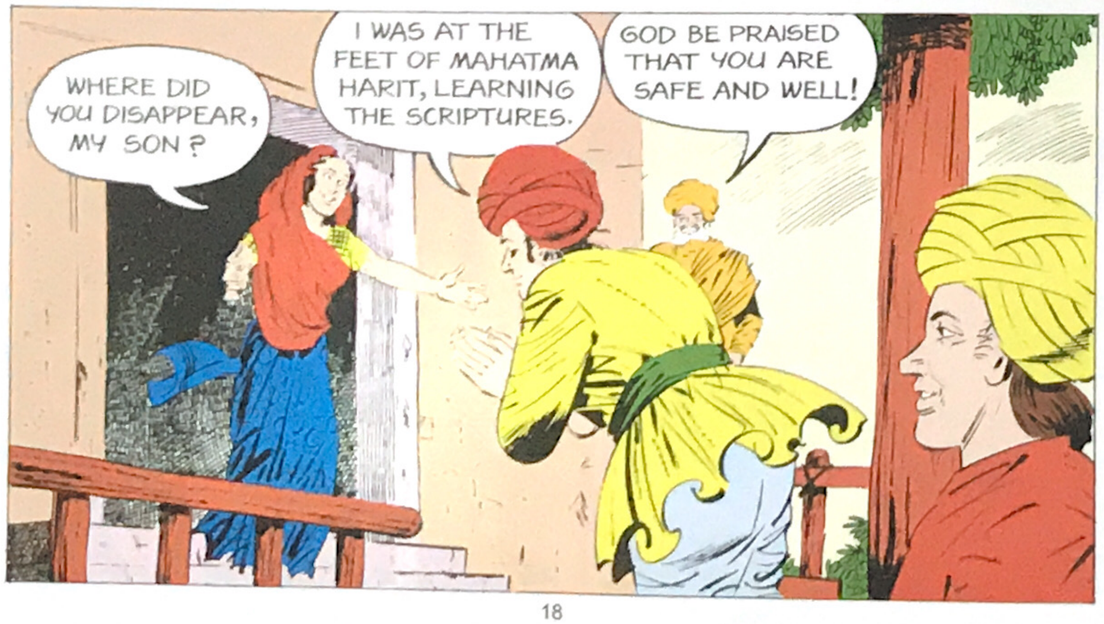
TO MAHATMA HARIT.

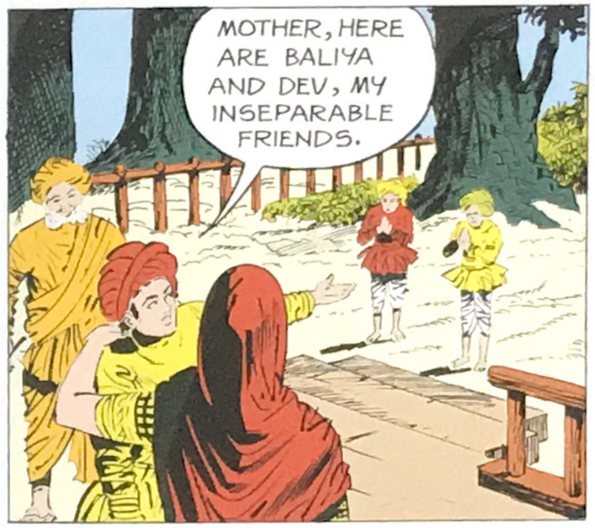
WE WILL NOT LET YOU GO ALONE, BAPPA.
THE THREE OF US WILL STICK TOGETHER.
I AM FORTUNATE TO HAVE FRIENDS LIKE YOU.


MEANWHILE AT THE RAJMATA'S—
RAJMATA, BAPPA HAS RUN AWAY FROM THE BRAHMAN'S HOUSE.
NO ONE KNOWS WHERE HE IS.
WHAT SHALL WE DO? HE MIGHT HAVE FALLEN INTO THE ENEMY'S HANDS!


ONE DAY, MONTHS LATER, AT MAHATMA HARIT'S GROVE—
I CANNOT STAY IN HIDING FOREVER. I AM GOING TO SEE MY MOTHER.
BUT THE KING'S MEN ARE STILL LOOKING FOR YOU.

YOU ARE TAKING A GREAT RISK.
I'M NO COWARD!

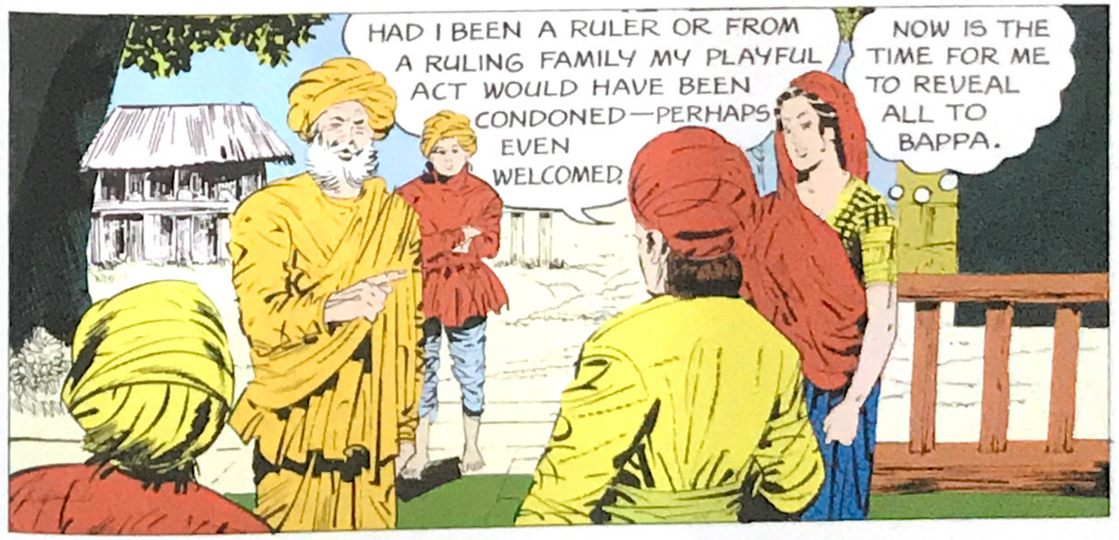

WHERE DID YOU DISAPPEAR, MY SON?
I WAS AT THE FEET OF MAHATMA HARIT, LEARNING THE SCRIPTURES.
GOD BE PRAISED THAT YOU ARE SAFE AND WELL!


MOTHER, HERE ARE BALIYA AND DEV, MY INSEPARABLE FRIENDS.

NOW I WILL ALWAYS LIVE WITH YOU, MOTHER.

BUT THAT CANNOT BE!
WHY NOT?

THE SOLANKI'S SOLDIERS ARE STILL LOOKING FOR YOU.
AND EVERYONE HAS SEEN YOUR PORTRAIT.


HAD I BEEN A RULER OR FROM A RULING FAMILY MY PLAYFUL ACT WOULD HAVE BEEN CONDONED—PERHAPS EVEN WELCOMED.
NOW IS THE TIME FOR ME TO REVEAL ALL TO BAPPA.

THE RAJMATA TOLD HIM ALL ABOUT THEIR FAMILY AND WHY THEY HAD GONE INTO HIDING.

SON, I AM THE SISTER OF RAJA MORI OF CHITTOR.

A PRINCESS! YOU HAVE UNDERGONE ALL THIS FOR MY SAKE, MOTHER!

NOW THAT YOU ARE GROWN UP, DO YOUR DUTY, BAPPA.

I PROMISE THAT I WILL WIN BACK THE TERRITORIES OF MY FOREFATHERS AND RESTORE HONOUR TO THEM.

BAPPA KI JAI!

MAY GOD BLESS YOU!

LET US REST FOR A WHILE.

IT'S A WARM DAY.

LET US GO TO THAT HUT.

CLOSE TO THE HUT, BABA GORAKHNATH SAT IN MEDITATION.

HUSH! TAKE CARE NOT TO DISTURB HIM.

A LITTLE LATER, GORAKHNATH INTERRUPTING HIS MEDITATION, STARED AT BAPPA. THEN—

BRILLIANT YOUNG MAN, A TIME WILL COME WHEN YOU WILL UNITE RAJASTHAN AND LEAD HER TO VICTORY! THIS MAGIC SWORD WILL HELP YOU IN YOUR MISSION.

BABA KI JAI!

A FEW DAYS LATER, THE FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD BAPPA ARRIVED AT THE COURT OF RAJA MORI.

COME, SIT BY MY SIDE.

RAJA MORI OBSERVED BAPPA FOR A FEW DAYS AND TESTED HIS ABILITIES. THEN—

I BESTOW A SMALL ESTATE ON BAPPA RAWAL AND APPOINT HIM TO MY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

MAHARAJ KI...

JAI!

MEANWHILE AT THE PALACE –

DO YOU STILL WORSHIP THIS PICTURE?

HER HUSBAND IS THE ONLY GOD FOR A HINDU WOMAN!

YOUR DEVOTION IS SURE TO BE REWARDED.

HE IS SAID TO BE AT THE COURT OF CHITTOR.

BAPPA'S SHARP INTELLECT AND POLITE CONDUCT EARNED HIM THE RESPECT AND ADMIRATION OF RAJA MORI.

I HAD ALWAYS WANTED A BRAVE YOUNG MAN LIKE YOU IN MY COURT.

YOU HONOUR ME BY CALLING ME BRAVE. I WILL STAKE MY ALL TO HEIGHTEN YOUR GLORY.

THE COMMANDER OF MY FORCES IS TOO OLD. IF I APPOINT YOU IN HIS PLACE...?

I SHALL NOT DISAPPOINT YOU, UNCLE.

RAJA MORI'S OLD MINISTERS WERE ENRAGED AT THIS APPOINTMENT.

THIS IS UNFAIR AND UNJUST!

OUR KING TRUSTS HIM BEYOND REASON!

HE IS HARDLY SIXTEEN YEARS OLD.

IN ALL RESPECTS, BAPPA IS OUR INFERIOR. HE HAS NO EXPERIENCE.

TO WORK UNDER A MERE BOY – WHAT A HUMILIATION!

MEANWHILE NEWS OF BAPPA'S VALOUR REACHED THE SOLANKI RULER TOO. HE FOUND OUT ALL ABOUT HIM.

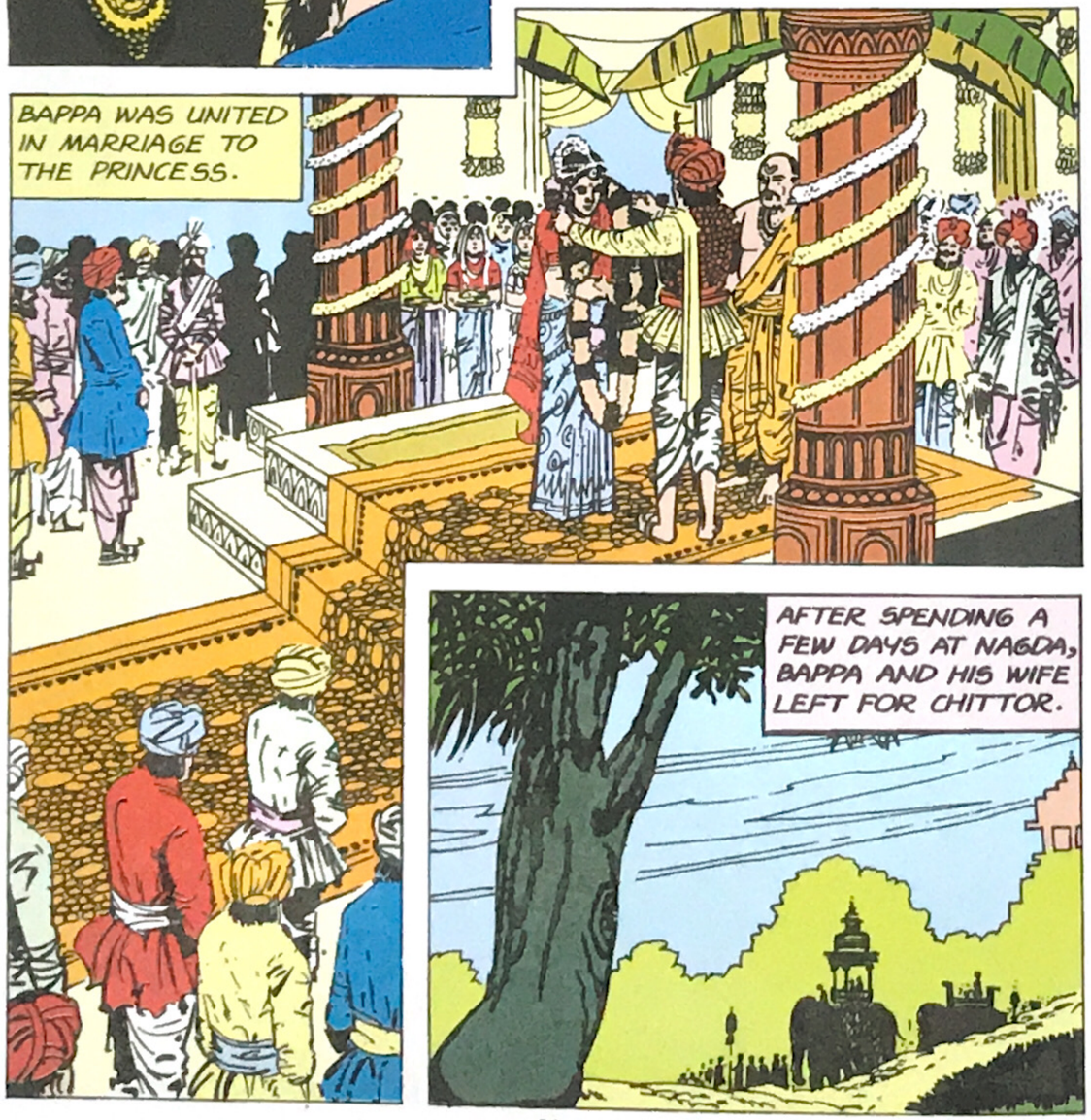
HE IS THE MOST ELIGIBLE YOUTH FOR MY DAUGHTER. I MUST SEND A PROPOSAL TO HIM!

A WEDDING PROPOSAL! FROM THE SOLANKI!

OUR KING KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOU.

AND THE PRINCESS?
SHE WORSHIPS YOUR PORTRAIT, MY LORD.

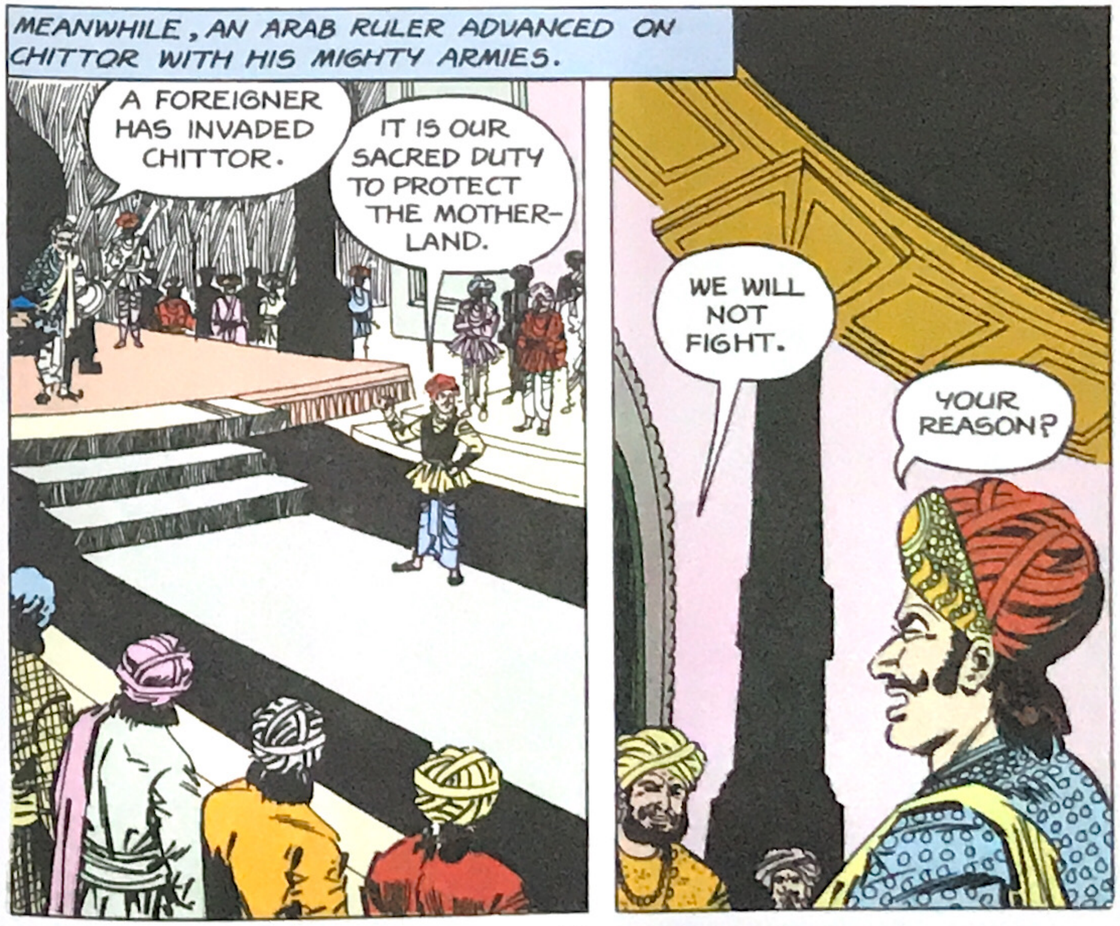
INFORM YOUR KING THAT I ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL.
MAHARAJ KI JAI!


BAPPA WAS UNITED IN MARRIAGE TO THE PRINCESS.

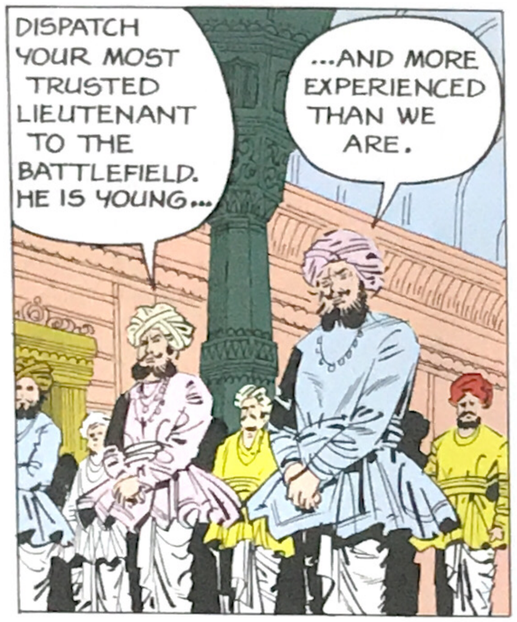
AFTER SPENDING A FEW DAYS AT NAGDA, BAPPA AND HIS WIFE LEFT FOR CHITTOR.

SOON AFTER HIS ARRIVAL AT CHITTOR -
MY MINISTERS RESENT YOUR NEW APPOINT-MENT.
I WILL GIVE IT UP IF YOU WISH.

NO. USE YOUR INNATE ABILITIES AND WIN THEM OVER.
YOUR CONFI-DENCE IN ME GIVES ME GREAT STRENGTH.


MEANWHILE, AN ARAB RULER ADVANCED ON CHITTOR WITH HIS MIGHTY ARMIES.
A FOREIGNER HAS INVADED CHITTOR.
IT IS OUR SACRED DUTY TO PROTECT THE MOTHER-LAND.
WE WILL NOT FIGHT.
YOUR REASON?

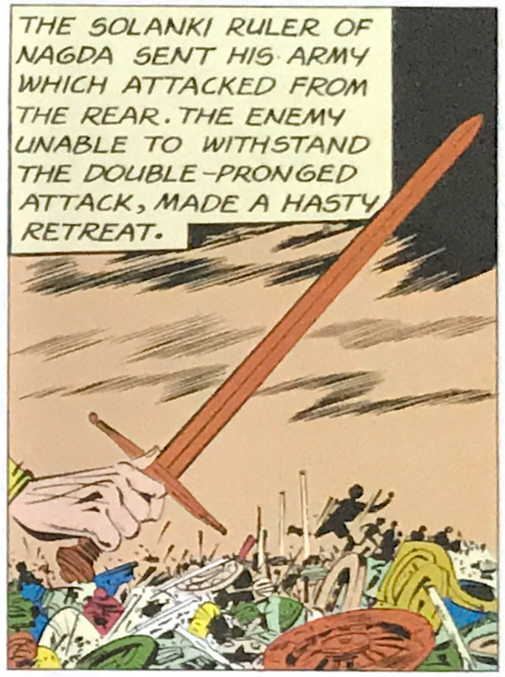
WE ARE TOO OLD.
WE RETURN THE LANDS AND GIFTS YOU BESTOWED ON US.


DISPATCH YOUR MOST TRUSTED LIEUTENANT TO THE BATTLEFIELD. HE IS YOUNG...
...AND MORE EXPERIENCED THAN WE ARE.

THE TAUNT WAS TOO MUCH FOR BAPPA.
AND BRAVER, TOO!
THEN WHY DELAY! GET TO THE BATTLEFIELD!

MOST CERTAINLY, I WILL! LET THE AGED GO HOME AND REST. BAPPA WILL TAKE CARE OF THE ENEMY, UNAIDED.

BAPPA'S FORCES FOUGHT FIERCELY.

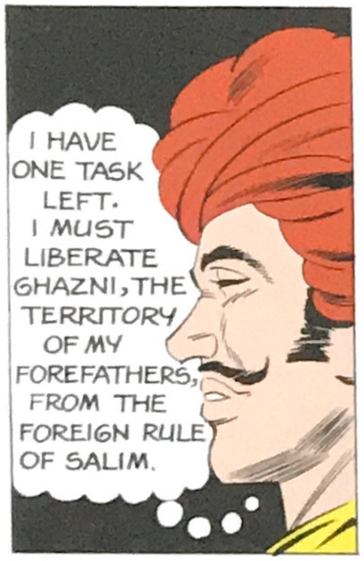

THE SOLANKI RULER OF NAGDA SENT HIS ARMY WHICH ATTACKED FROM THE REAR. THE ENEMY UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE DOUBLE-PRONGED ATTACK, MADE A HASTY RETREAT.

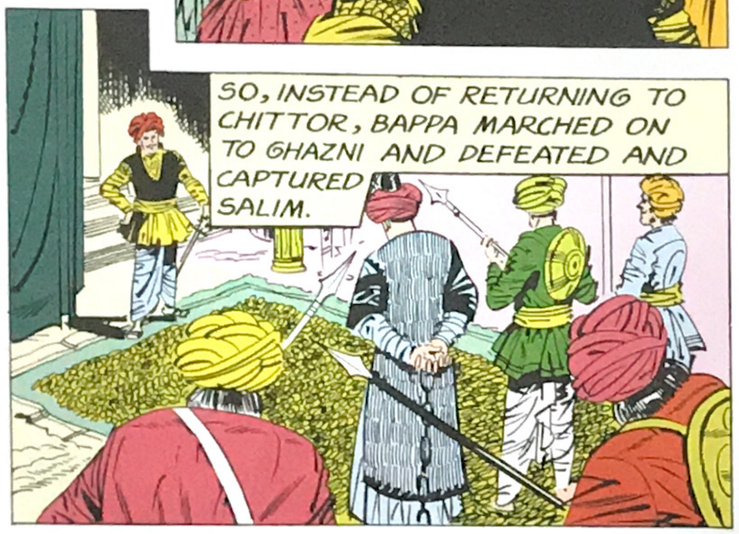
JUST THEN A SOLDIER RAN UP TO BAPPA.
WHAT IS IT, MY MAN ?
THE COUNCILLORS ARE ASHAMED. THEY ARE ON THEIR WAY TO THE BATTLE-FIELD.

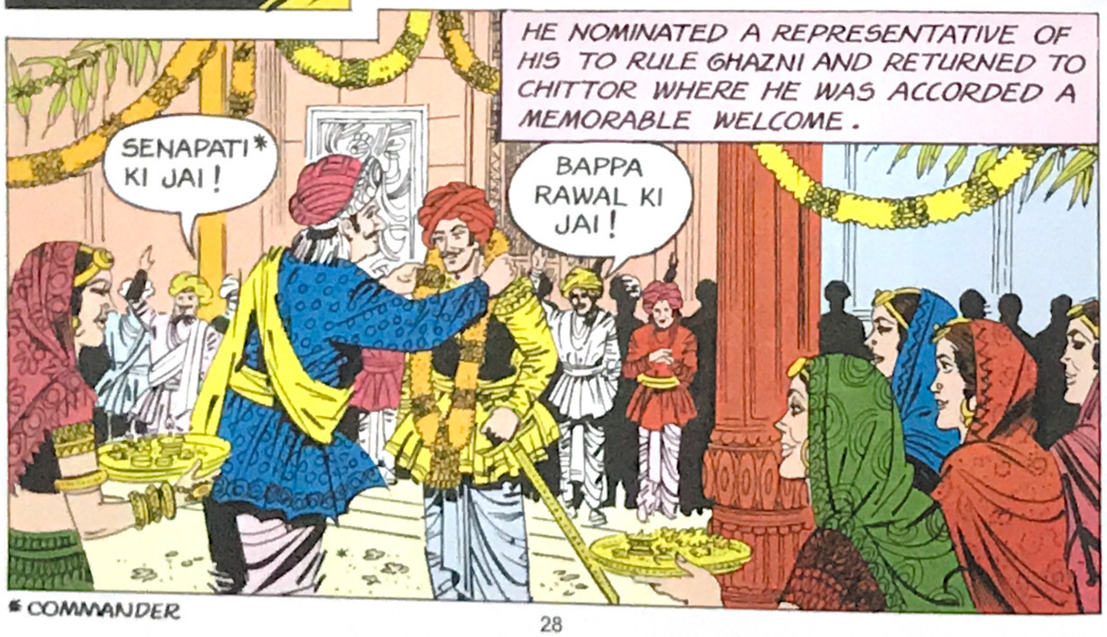
TELL THEM IT'S TOO LATE. THE ENEMY HAS BEEN ROUTED!

YOU MAY CONVEY THE HAPPY TIDINGS TO OUR KING.

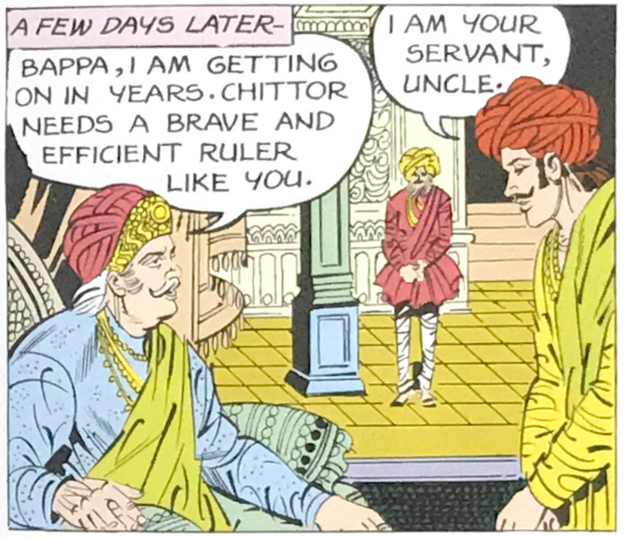
BAPPA HAD PROVED HIMSELF. THE COUNCILLORS BEGAN SINGING HIS PRAISES.
WE ARE GLAD THAT CHITTOR HAS SUCH A BRAVE SON IN YOU!
WE ARE WITH YOU!

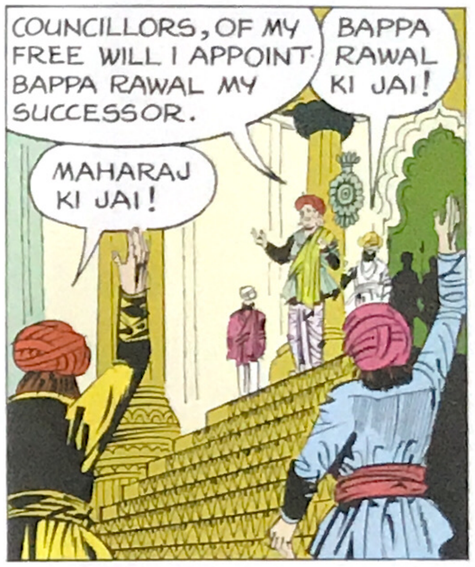

I HAVE ONE TASK LEFT. I MUST LIBERATE GHAZNI, THE TERRITORY OF MY FOREFATHERS, FROM THE FOREIGN RULE OF SALIM.

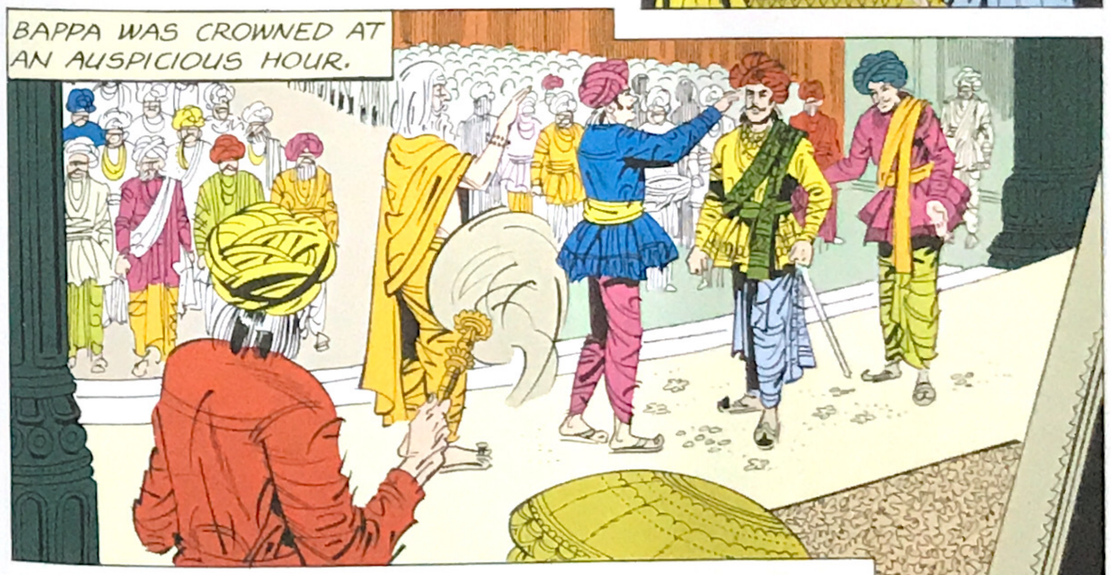

SO, INSTEAD OF RETURNING TO CHITTOR, BAPPA MARCHED ON TO GHAZNI AND DEFEATED AND CAPTURED SALIM.


HE NOMINATED A REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS TO RULE GHAZNI AND RETURNED TO CHITTOR WHERE HE WAS ACCORDED A MEMORABLE WELCOME.
SENAPATI* KI JAI!
BAPPA RAWAL KI JAI!

* COMMANDER

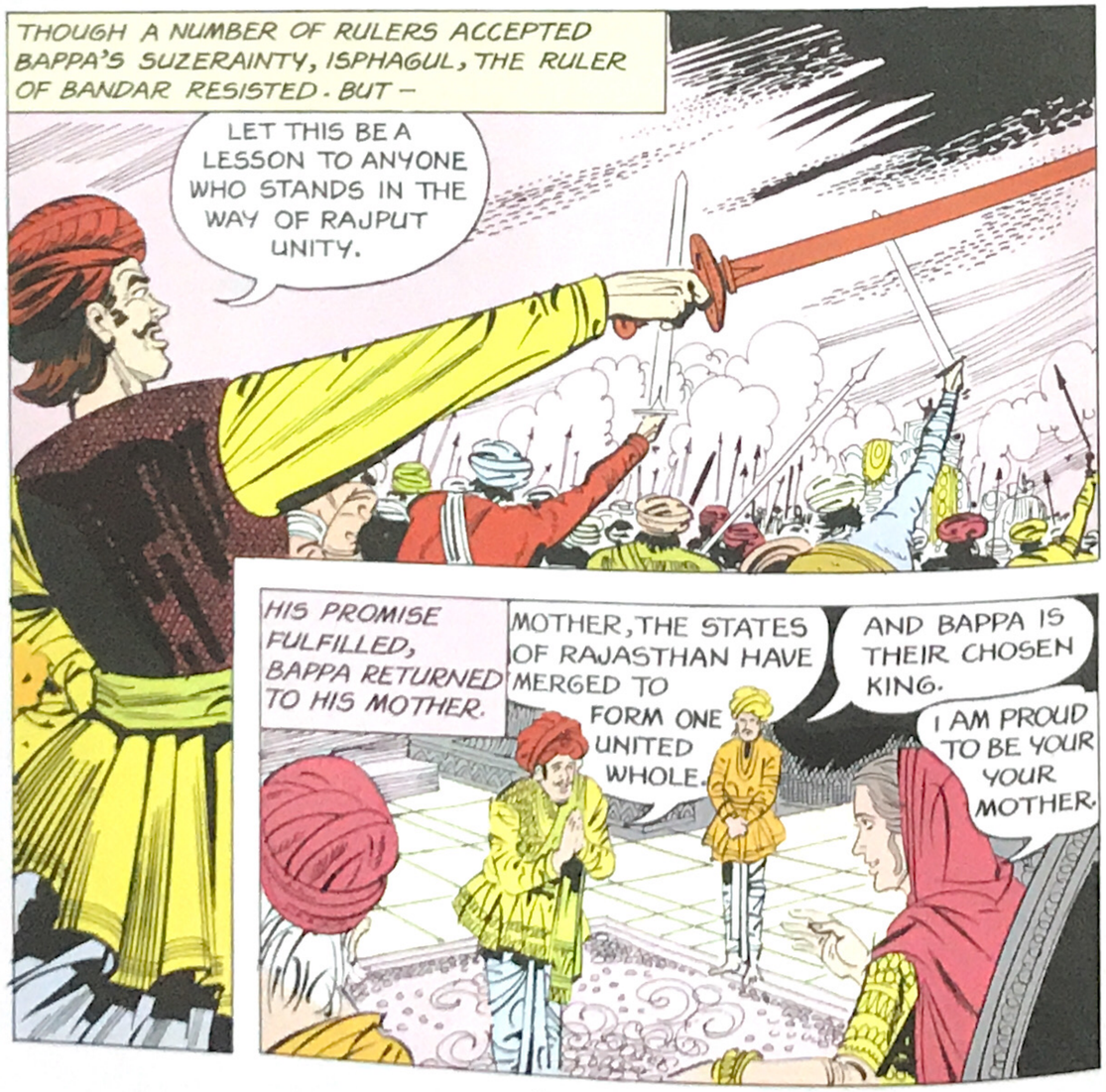

A FEW DAYS LATER-
BAPPA, I AM GETTING ON IN YEARS. CHITTOR NEEDS A BRAVE AND EFFICIENT RULER LIKE YOU.
I AM YOUR SERVANT, UNCLE.


COUNCILLORS, OF MY FREE WILL I APPOINT BAPPA RAWAL MY SUCCESSOR.
BAPPA RAWAL KI JAI!
MAHARAJ KI JAI!


BAPPA WAS CROWNED AT AN AUSPICIOUS HOUR.

SOON AFTER THE CORONATION, BAPPA RAWAL INVITED ALL THE CHIEFTAINS OF THE NEIGHBOURING STATES TO CHITTOR.
FRIENDS, IF ONLY WE WERE UNITED, NO ONE FROM ACROSS THE BORDERS WOULD DARE TO ATTACK US...

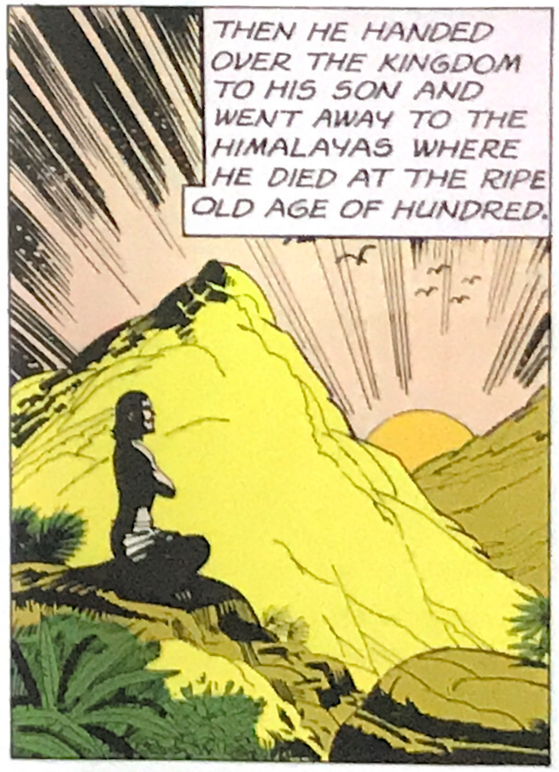
WE LOOK TO YOU FOR GUIDANCE!
WE WILLINGLY ACCEPT YOU AS OUR KING.
RAJASTHAN SHALL BE ONE UNITED KINGDOM.


THOUGH A NUMBER OF RULERS ACCEPTED BAPPA'S SUZERAINTY, ISPHAGUL, THE RULER OF BANDAR RESISTED. BUT –
LET THIS BE A LESSON TO ANYONE WHO STANDS IN THE WAY OF RAJPUT UNITY.

HIS PROMISE FULFILLED, BAPPA RETURNED TO HIS MOTHER.
MOTHER, THE STATES OF RAJASTHAN HAVE MERGED TO FORM ONE UNITED WHOLE.
AND BAPPA IS THEIR CHOSEN KING.
I AM PROUD TO BE YOUR YOUR MOTHER.

BAPPA RAWAL AND HIS ARMIES INVADED VARIOUS COUNTRIES INCLUDING ISPAHAN, KANDAHAR, IRAN, TURAN AND KHORASAN AND BROUGHT THEM UNDER INDIAN RULE. SEVERAL YEARS LATER HE RETURNED TO CHITTOR.

FOR MANY YEARS BAPPA RULED CHITTOR.
MINISTER, IS ALL WELL IN OUR STATE?
YOUR SUBJECTS ARE ALL HAPPY AND CONTENTED.


THEN HE HANDED OVER THE KINGDOM TO HIS SON AND WENT AWAY TO THE HIMALAYAS WHERE HE DIED AT THE RIPE OLD AGE OF HUNDRED.